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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2016  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KUNR](#) [UNHRC](#) [UN](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: DEMARCHE ON ASIAN CANDIDATES TO UN  
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

REF: STATE 60967

Classified By: AMB. JEFFREY J. LUNSTEAD. REASON: 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (SBU) Ambassador delivered reftel demarche to Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera and Foreign Secretary H.M.G.S. Palihakkara on April 20. The Ambassador stressed the US commitment to ensuring the effectiveness of the Human Rights Council and the need for the Asia group to support candidates that are sincerely committed to human rights and to discourage support for candidates that condone or commit human rights abuses. The election of a country with a poor human rights record would undermine the credibility of the Human Rights Council, he emphasized, noting that at least one such country had put itself forward as a candidate. He urged the Sri Lankan Government to take the Asian candidates' human rights records into account when deciding which to support.

¶2. (C) "We know which country you're talking about," the Foreign Secretary said. Both the Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary, while not mentioning Iran by name, agreed on the need to support candidates with demonstrated and sincere commitments to human rights. They did not ask about possible US support for Sri Lanka's own candidacy.  
LUNSTEAD